

The son's copy
Remarks on a contemporary manuscript of Ibn 'Asākir's 'History of
the City of Damascus'¹

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Introduction

Abū al-Qāsim 'Alī ibn al-Hasan, known as Ibn 'Asākir (499/1105-571/1175), an outstanding member of the cultural elite of Damascus, devoted his life to literature and scholarship, and his most famous endeavour consisted of the compilation of his gigantic work 'The History of the City of Damascus', which has recently become completely available through the 80-volume edition by 'Umar ibn Gharāma al-'Amrawī. The work is not a 'History' in the modern sense of the word, in which a flow of events is described, with an attempt by the historian to explain these events by the analysis of actors and circumstances. Ibn 'Asākir's approach is quite different. After the necessary preliminary remarks on the early history of Damascus and a description of the locality (vols. 1-2 of al-'Amrawī's edition), he has structured his work as an alphabetically arranged reference work about the men (and a few women) who made the history of Damascus, both natives and visitors, and from all walks of life. He enumerates them as prophets, leaders, caliphs, governors, scholars of jurisprudence, judges, scholars, knowledgeable people, Qur'ān readers, grammarians, poets, traditionists, and so on.² This way of writing a local history Ibn 'Asākir had derived from the 'History of Baghdad', *Ta'rīkh Baghdād* by al-Kātib al-Baghdādī (d. 463/1071), a work which he had become acquainted with at an early stage of his life. Another work, the later 'History of Aleppo' by Ibn al-'Adīm (d. 660/1262), is arranged in the same way, although Ibn al-'Adīm also wrote a much shorter chronicle of Aleppo, in which the flow of events is given.³ Ibn al-'Adīm may have felt an urge to compete with Ibn 'Asākir's monumental 'History of the City of Damascus'. Celebrating the fact that in 2001 it was exactly fifty years since Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid published the first volume of Ibn 'Asākir's 'History', I wish to make here some observations of textual criticism in connection with the manuscripts and editions of the *Ta'rīkh Madīnat Dimashq*.

¹ An abbreviated version of this article, together with a full facsimile of the Leiden MS Or.12.644, is available on the web: http://bc.leidenuniv.nl/olg/selec/tarikh_dimashq/index.htm

² The biographical dictionary occupies vols. 3-68 and 71-74 (for the men) and vols. 69-70 (for the women) of the new edition. The categories of persons are enumerated by Ibn 'Asākir in his introductory chapter, vol. 1, p. 5.

³ The main work being *Bughyat al-Ṭalab fī Ta'rīkh Ḥalab*, and the chronologically arranged extract *Zubdat al-Ḥalab fī Ta'rīkh Ḥalab*.

The Leiden fragment

The manuscript fragment which is the subject of the present essay is a relatively recent acquisition of the library of Leiden University. In 1974 it was the object of research by P.S. van Koningsveld, the then curator of the library who himself had purchased it in 1972 from Frederick de Jong, who in turn had purchased the fragment in the late 1960's from 'Abd al-Hamīd al-Shīmī, a private Egyptian scholar in Cairo.⁴ In the course of 1977, Qāsim al-Sāmarrā'ī, a Leiden based Iraqi scholar, was able to find in Cairo two more leaves of the very same set, which he subsequently presented to the Leiden library, so that a few of the lacunae in the Leiden fragment could be filled. Al-Sāmarrā'ī's notes in pencil can be seen on the two additional leaves (between ff. 52-53 and 69-70).

The Leiden fragment's most conspicuous feature is that it originates from a MS of the 'History' which was copied by the author's son al-Qāsim (527/1133-600/1203), apparently during his father's lifetime.⁵ The son's colophons on f. 20a (the middle decade of Ṣafar), f. 39b (Ṣafar) and f. 70a (Ṣafar) all date from the year 562/1167. From the wording at the beginning and end of the quires of the Leiden fragment it becomes evident that the author's copy, or the author's presence, was never far away when the volumes from which the Leiden fragment comes were copied. It is also evident that this fragment, and therefore the volumes from which it originates, are an important witness for the *Ta'riḫ Madīnat Dimashq*, if not the most important, since the father's copy, the autograph, does not seem to have survived. For the basics of the description of the fragment, I refer to what van Koningsveld has written, and use that as a starting point for my further reflections on the Leiden fragment.

Form and contents of the Leiden fragment

The Leiden fragment⁶ now contains 70 ff. plus the two additional folios which were added later, and two inserts attached to the quires (between ff. 6-7, 52-53). According to this count, there are still lacunae of altogether eight folios. The folios of the Leiden fragment are distributed over four 'parts' (four *ajzā'*, numbered by the copyist 277-280). The numbering of these parts reflect a new division of the work, whereas another division of the work is still visible by marginal notes:

- f. 11a: end of a *juz'* 369;
- f. 23b: end of a *juz'* 370;
- f. 36a: end of a *juz'* 371;
- f. 51a: end of a *juz'* 373;
- f. 64b: end of a *juz'* 374.

⁴ The Leiden MSS Or. 14.458 and Or. 14.459 also come from his collection. The latter MS contains notes in the hand of Mr. al-Shīmī.

⁵ He is No. 5 in Wustenfeld's genealogical table of the Banū 'Asākir. See also the genealogy of the Banu 'Asākir given by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid in the introduction to the first volume of his edition, pp. 2-3.

⁶ Class-mark Or. 12.644.

From this one can deduce that the *ajzā'* in the other copy were shorter, by about one fifth, than those in the Leiden fragment. Van Koningsveld identifies this other copy with the author's copy, but that is far from sure. In fact these numbers 369-374 partly coincide with those in the Petersburg manuscript.⁷ To make things even more confusing, the Petersburg volume is also a son's copy. At the beginning of the *ajzā'* in the Petersburg MS is the same formula which we also find on top of the pages with which the quires in the Leiden fragment begin.⁸ There is an overlap of text between the Petersburg manuscript and the Leiden fragment.⁹ In the Petersburg volume the quire numbering of the Leiden fragment is present, and is written by the copyist.¹⁰ In the Leiden fragment, the references to the Petersburg *ajzā'* are written as well, but evidently as a marginal addition, and possibly not even by the copyist. From this it follows that the Leiden fragment already existed when the Petersburg volume was copied. In all probability, the Petersburg volume was copied by an expert secretary from the Leiden fragment. The Petersburg volume is devoid of sets of readers' protocols. It may have been meant to become itself a manuscript around which an audience would focus, but in the end it did not become one. The Petersburg volume was therefore, and also because of the difference of size of its *ajzā'*, written by a copyist, and outside reading sessions.

The writing of the Leiden fragment was done by the son in the presence of the father.¹¹ The son's copy, one may assume, may have been made in private sessions with the father, and possibly not (or not only) in reading sessions, but in copying sessions. That this was a family affair is evident, as the copyist's son Muḥammad profited of these occasions to be a *sāmi'*, a listener, whose presence in the sessions cannot have failed to give him a degree of authority over the text as well. Analysis of the readers' protocols in the Leiden and Azhar manuscripts shows that the distribution of the text through reading and certification sessions was to a large extent a family affair.

For the sake of clarity it should be added here that this division into *ajzā'* does not, of course, reflect any partition in the content of the work (which is basically an alphabetically arranged biographical dictionary), but that it is made in order to divide the text into lectures of approximately equal length. These portions often do not even coincide with the beginnings of a biography. One may compare this double way of dividing a text with the way the Qur'ān is divided into 114 chapters of different size and at the same time into thirty *ajzā'* of equal length.

The text in the Leiden fragment corresponds to part of vol. 32 of the edition by al-'Amrawī (pp. 26, line 9 - 287, line 14). There are still a few

⁷ See the facsimile edition, pp. 493-495, showing the transition from *juz'* 369-370. The text corresponds to that in the Leiden fragment on f. 10b. Van Koningsveld's assumption (p. 108) that these other numbers refer to the *ajzā'* of the author's copy is untenable.

⁸ Eg. the beginning of Petersburg *juz'* 369 on p. 441 of the facsimile edition.

⁹ The beginning of the Leiden fragment corresponds with Petersburg, facsimile edition, p. 451.

¹⁰ Facsimile, p. 451, line 6, indicates the end of *juz'* 276.

¹¹ See the *bulūgh* notes on ff. 20a, 39b and 70a.

lacunae in the Leiden fragment in *juz'* 279 since all leaves containing references to the author's copy and to reading sessions are lacking. Each *juz'* has a title-page and a dated colophon of itself, only *juz'* 279, being lacunous, does not give a colophon, but it has the title-page and without any doubt it belongs to same set of *ajzā'* as 277, 278 and 280. At the end, *juz'* 279 lacks but one leaf since only a few words of the text are missing between the two *ajzā'*.¹² It also lacks the readers' protocols, with which all quires end, because that leaf is missing at the end of the quire. Each *juz'* in principle consists of one quire only, comprising ten folded sheets. Each *juz'* is written in the hand of Ibn 'Asākir's son al-Qāsim ibn 'Alī ibn al-Ḥasan. Van Koningsveld's remark that the Leiden fragment may represent an extended draft of the author's original text will be set against the evidence of the manuscript itself and the information gathered from al-'Amrawī's critical apparatus.

Readers' notes in the Leiden fragment

A few clues can be found in the fragment which establish the relationship between the text in the fragment and the autograph, the existence of which we can at the moment only postulate. The notes of *Taṣnīf* (author's indication) and *Samā'* (listener's indication) can be found on the title-page of each of the four quires (ff. 1a, 21a, 41a, 52a). Here follows the text of the title-page of *juz'* 277 (f. 1a):

الجزء السابع والسبعون بعد المائتين من كتاب تاريخ مدينة دمشق حماها الله وذكر فضلها وتسمية من حلها من الامثال او اجتاز بنواحيها من واديها واهلها تصنيف الحافظ ابي القاسم علي بن الحسن بن هبة الله الشافعي رحمه الله سمع ولده القاسم بن علي بن الحسن واجازة له من بعض شيوخ ابيه رحمهم الله

However, there is in this text on the title-page also mention of an *ijāza*, an authorization to transmit, issued as it seems to the son by one or more of his father's Shaykhs. This would imply that the relationship between the present text and the author's copy is not entirely beyond doubt. For one, the author, who could easily have authenticated the son's copy in his handwriting, either after his reading session with his son al-Qāsim and his grandson Muḥammad, or after the reading sessions which are described in the first set of reading protocols, has apparently not done so. Would that be the reason why the copyist al-Qāsim thought it necessary to try to enhance the value of his copy of his father's magnum opus by having it authenticated by other scholars as well, in order to make good for the lack of the author's autograph authentication? May al-Qāsim have been eager to avoid the reproach that his copy was merely an informal, underhand family affair? This raises yet another question, namely that of the financial interests involved in the distribution of an authenticated text. Lack of data in the Leiden fragment must postpone this discussion for the moment, but one should realize that participation in the reading sessions in order to obtain the independent right of further proliferation of the authoritative text cannot have been a gratuitous affair. Was it the case that the better the credentials of a manuscript, the better the fees that could be obtained from the studious listeners, and the more one

¹² See the transition in the edition, vol. 32, p. 223, between lines 7-8.

في السابع والسبعين بعد المائة من كتاب تاريخ دمشق
سنة حلتها من المائتين اثنان عشر مائة واربعمائة
نصبت الحافظ لى العاصم بن علي بن الحسين عليه السلام
سماع وولد العاصم بن علي بن الحسين وادار له في يوم الجمعة

Leiden, Or. 12.644, f. 1a: The title-page of *juz'* 277 of the son's copy of Ibn 'Asākir's *Ta'rīkh Dimashq*

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should invest in obtaining the right to further divulge the text from a manuscript with an impressive pedigree? It may have been a matter of copyright *avant la lettre*.

The introductory remarks, before the text in each quire actually begins, between the *basmala* and the first *khavar*, are (on ff. 1b, 21b, 41b, 52b): *akhbaranā wālidī al-ḥāfiẓ Abū al-Qāsim 'Alī ibn Ḥasan raḥimahu Allāh qāla*. This too implies a close relationship with the author's copy. But there is something wrong, namely the *tarḥīm* which follows the name of the author. It implies that the author had already died when this sentence was written, but the author died in 571/1175 and the manuscript is dated 562/1167. If one looks well at the opening line of each quire (ff. 1b, 21b, 41b, 52b) one can see that these sentences may be later additions written by al-Qāsim after the demise of his father. Especially the opening line on f. 41b gives the impression of being a later addition. There is also a *tarḥīm* on the four title-pages, which implies that either these title-pages were added after the author's demise, or that the copyist's dating at the end of the quires is not altogether authentic. These additions were most likely written on the quires between the year of the author's demise (571/1175) and the year in which the second set of protocols of reading sessions were written: 576/1180.

The *Samā'* notes at the end of the three quires.

Three out of the four quires (Nos. 277, 278 and 280) of the Leiden fragment have each a note by the author's son about having read the quire with his father, during which sessions the author's grandson Muḥammad was present as a listener as well. This note of only one line of text is followed in each of these quires by five sets of similar readers' protocols, which document reading sessions before an audience with the manuscript in a period of over fifty years, between 562-619 (1167-1222). The texts of these protocols as found in quire 277 will follow hereafter in full. For convenience's sake, the numbering given to these protocols by van Koningsveld is maintained.

The five sets of protocols give us twofold information. First they present us with an overview of the five reading sessions in which the present manuscript was used in the years 562, 576, 592, 615, and 619 AH. The five sets of protocols are easily identified by the hand of their secretary. Each protocol enumerates the names of those present in the audience. Each protocol makes clear the functions of some persons of the audience: the scholar or notable presiding over the session, the readers of the text and the secretary whose task it was to write down the names of the participants. The secretary would also note if someone had only participated in part of the session. Each audience within the same set of protocols is slightly different. Apparently there is a hard core of listeners, and in addition there is a shifting group of persons present at the different sessions for each of the quires. As we have three quires each of which contains a similar set of five protocols, we can also get an impression of the stretch of time during which reading sessions for the same audience took place. The Leiden fragment of Ibn 'Asākir's 'History of the City of Damascus' is an eloquent example of this way of divulging texts in sessions with the author or another qualified person presiding, which was then extremely popular, especially in Damascus. Stefan Leder and his two co-authors have painted a vivid image of this process of transmission of texts, and by their repertory of many thousands of participants

they have shown how wide-spread and popular these reading sessions once were. As the present article is primarily meant to serve textual criticism in connection with the *Ta'riḫ Madīnat Dimashq*, a profound analysis of the audiences present at the different reading sessions in which the quires of the Leiden fragment figured will have to wait for another occasion.

An overview of the reading sessions

The first set of protocols consisting of Nos. 1 (f. 20a), 7 (f. 40a) and 13 (70a) describes three sessions in the Great Mosque of Damascus which were held on Thursday 15 Shawwāl 562, Friday 16 Shawwāl 562 and Thursday 22 Shawwāl 562 (between 11-18 August 1167). This set of protocols is the only one in the Leiden fragment which was written during the author's lifetime.

The second set of protocols consisting of Nos. 2 (f. 20a), 8 (f. 40a) and 14 (f. 70a) describes three sessions in the Great Mosque of Damascus which were held on Monday 4 Rajab 576, Friday halfway Rajab 576 and one in the middle decade of Sha'bān 576 (between 1 December 1180 and c. 11 January 1181).

The third set of protocols consisting of Nos. 3 (f. 20b), 9 (f. 40b) and 15 (f. 70b) describes three sessions in Damascus which were held in the first decade of Muḥarram 592 (two sessions) and in the middle decade of Muḥarram of 592 (between c.17 and c.27 December 1195).

The fourth set of protocols consisting of Nos. 4 (f. 20b), 10 (f. 40b), 11 (f. 40b) and 16 (f. 70b) describes three sessions in the citadel of Damascus and one in the mosque of al-Mizza, which were held on Tuesday 16 Rabī' 1 615, Wednesday 17 Rabī' 1 615 and Thursday 18 Rabī' 1 615 (between 19-21 June 1218). The note from the mosque in al-Mizza (No. 11) mentions a session on Tuesday 23 Rabī' 1 615 (26 June 1218). In that latter session the reading of the entire 40th volume (*mujallad*) out of the set of 57 volumes of the *Ta'riḫ Madīnat Dimashq* was completed. The hand of the secretary of this set of protocols is cursive and difficult to read.

The fifth set of protocols consisting of Nos. 5 (f. 20b), one protocol unnoticed by van Koningsveld (f. 21a) and No. 12 (f. 52a) describes three sessions, which are recorded by a secretary writing in a *maghribī* hand in Damascus, and which were held on 1 Rajab 619, Thursday 9 Rajab 619 and Friday 17 Rajab 619 (between 18 August - 3 September 1222). There is a clear connection between this final set of protocols and MS Cairo, al-Azhar Library, 452/Abaza 6746, which was copied in the same year 619 by the very secretary of this set of protocols. The Azhar manuscript must be the product of the reading sessions the details of which were recorded in the Leiden fragment.¹³

From all this it becomes clear that the sessions took place at very regular intervals, sometimes on successive days, sometimes just a few days after the previous session. To explain the slightly larger interval between the second and third protocol in each set of protocols one is reminded that the protocols in the lacunous *juz*' 279 of the Leiden fragment are not preserved.

¹³ The Azhar catalogue, vol. 5, p. 379.

The texts of the protocols

Some editorial clarification must be given here first. I have often, but not always, added a *hamza*, thereby following modern usage. I have maintained the *alif* of the word *ibn* which is added when the word occurs at the beginning of a line. I have maintained different spellings of the same name, precisely as they occur in the manuscript (e.g. the name Ibrāhīm occurring both with and without the *alif* in the middle syllable). As reading sessions' protocols never excel in clarity of writing, not all names were read with absolute certainty, and a few names or words could not be read at all. Especially my understanding of some of the *nisba*'s, and a few names of Turkish origin has suffered from this. The sets of protocols in quires Nos. 278 and 280 have sometimes been used in order to obtain a corroborative reading.¹⁴

Before the first protocol is a separate *bulūgh* note by the the author's son al-Qāsim, dated the middle decade of Šafar 562/1167 (f. 20a):

بلغت سماعا على والدي الشيخ الامام العالم الحافظ الثقة ابي القسم علي بن الحسن بن هبة الله
وسمعه ابي محمد وكتب القاسم بن علي في العشر الاوسط من صفر سنة اثنتين وستين وخمسائة

Protocol No. 1 of a reading session with the author presiding, dated Damascus, in the Great Mosque, on Thursday 15 Shawwāl 562/1167, recorded by the secretary 'Abd al-Raḥman ibn Abī Mansur ibn Basīm al-Shāfi'ī. The absence of the name of the author's son in this protocol is conspicuous. At the end of the protocol, a person is mentioned who has only heard two *qā'ima* (two leaves) from the beginning of the author's copy (f. 20a):

سماعا على مؤلفه الامام العالم الحافظ الثقة الدين صدر الحفاظ ناصر السنة محدث الشام ابي
القسم علي بن الحسن بن هبة الله الشافعي ادام الله جماله الشيخ الامام حماد الدين ابو محمد عبد
الله بن محمد بن سعد الله الخنفي والشيخ ابو بكر محمد بن بركة بن خلف بن كرما الصلحي والشيخ
الامين البهاء ابو القسم الخضر بن الحسن بن علي شواش والقاضي الامين النجيب ابو الغنائم هبة الله
بن محفوظ بن الحسن بن صصري بقرأة ابنه الفقيه ابي المواهب الحسن وابو الحرث عبد الرحمن بن
محمد بن مرشد بن منقذ وابو علي الحسين بن المحسن بن ابي المضا ويحيى بن سعيد بن عبد الله وابو
سلامة بن ابي نصر بن محمد الحمويان وابو عبد الله الحسين بن عبد الرحمن بن الحسن بن عبدان وابو
زكريا يحيى بن علي بن مرهل وابو حفص عمر بن علي بن الحسن بن البدوح المتطبب والقاضي ابو
المعالي محمد بن القاضي الزكي ابي الحسن علي بن محمد بن يحيى القرشي ويوسف بن ابي الحسين
بن احمد واسماعيل بن حماد الدمشقي وابراهيم بن غازي بن سلمان وابراهيم بن مهدي بن علي
ومحسن بن سراج بن محسن وعلي بن معالي بن علي الشواعري وابو المكارم عبد الواحد بن عبد
الوهاب بن عبد الله الانصاري وابو المكارم فضالة بن نصر الله العرضي وظافر بن نجا بن يوسف وابنه
علي والشريف سيف بن عمر بن اسماعيل العمري وعبد الواحد بن بركات بن ابي الحسين الصفار وابو
القسم بن محمد بن ناجية وابراهيم بن عطا بن ابراهيم وابو محمد بن علي بن ابيه وتركان شا بن

¹⁴ My colleague Dr. Arnoud Vrolijk was so kind to help me solve some of these problems. His help in procuring me a copy of the 80-volume edition of the *Ta'rikh Madīnat Dimashq* was also of vital importance to me.

قراور (؟) بن قريوز الديلمي وابو الحسين بن ابي المعالي بن خلدون وابراهيم بن بشتكين بن عبد الله وابو طالب بن ابراهيم بن هبة الله الفراء واسماعيل بن جوهر ويوسف بن مجلي وخضر بن ابي سعيد بن ابي زيد وعبد العزيز بن ابي محمد بن خلف الاشبيلي وبشتكين بن عبد الله وملسم بن ياسمين ويدران بن عبد الله وابراهيم بن عبد الرحمن بن حسن الفراء ويوسف بن خليفة وابو جعفر محمد بن محمد بن نصر البيهي الاصبهاني وفتاه بلال بن عبد الله ومحمد بن هبة الله بن محمد، الشيرازي وابو محمد القسم بن عبد الملك بن زيد الدولعي وابو علي بن محمود بن ابي حازم وعلي بن عبد الكريم بن اللبوسي وحسان بن ابي الفضل بن الحسن وحمة بن ابراهيم بن عبد الله وكاتب الأسماء عبد الرحمن بن ابي منصور بن بسيم الشافعي رحمه الله وذلك في يوم الخميس الخامس عشر من شوال سنة اثنتين وستين وخمس مائة بالجامع بدمشق وسمعه الا قائمتين من اوله على بن ابي القسم بن مفرج النابلسي وصلى على سيدنا محمد وآله وسلم

Protocol No. 2 of a reading session with the author's son al-Qāsim (with apparent reference to the *ījāza* which is also mentioned on the title-page of each quire) and Bahā' al-Dīn Abū al-Mawāhib al-Hasan ibn Abī al-Ghanā'im Hibat Allāh ibn Maḥfūz ibn Ṣaṣra (who is, together with his father, one of the readers mentioned in protocol No. 1) presiding, dated Damascus, in the Great Mosque, on Monday 4 Rajab 576/1180, recorded by Aḥmad ibn 'Alī ibn Abī Bakr ibn Isma'īl al-Qurṭubī. Some members of the audience were not recorded in this protocol, but in the copy (here referred to as *far'*, as opposed to *aṣl*) of the text made at the same occasion (f. 20a):

سمع جميع هذا الجزء على الشيخ الامام العالم الحافظ الثقة ثقة الدين شمس الحافظ ناصر السنة محدث الشام ابي محمد القسم بن علي بن الحسن بن هبة الله الشافعي أيده الله بطاعته بحق سماعه من والده قدس الله روحه وبالإجازة له من بعض اشياخ والده وعلى القاضي الاجل الحافظ بهاء الدين ابي المواهب الحسن بن القاضي ابي الغنائم هبة الله بن محفوظ بن صصري بحق سماعه من المصنف بقراءة اخوه القاضي شمس الدين ابو القسم الحسين بن القاضي ابي الغنائم والوزير زين الدولة ابو علي الحسين بن المحسن بن ابي المضا وابو علي الحسن بن علي بن عبد الوارث وابو العباس احمد بن علي بن يعلي السلمى وابو يعلى حمزة بن ابراهيم بن عبد الله بن ابراهيم وابو الحسين بن علي بن خلدون وابو القسم محمود بن محمد بن معاذ الحرقاني ومثبت الاسماء احمد بن علي بن ابي بكر بن اسماعيل القرطبي وسمع آخرون اسماؤهم مثبتة على الفرع المنقول من هذا الأصل وذلك في نوب آخرها الاثنتين رابع رجب الفرد سنة ست وسبعين وخمسائة بالجامع بمدينة دمشق حرسها الله

Protocol No. 3 of a reading session with the author's son al-Qāsim presiding, dated Damascus, the first decade of Muḥarram 592/1195, recorded by Badī ibn Abī al-Mu'ammār ibn Isma'īl al-Tibrīzī, whereas the names of three persons who only heard the second half of the text are separately recorded. One of these three partial listeners can be identified with the secretary of protocol No. 1 (f. 20b):

سمع هذا الجزء على الشيخ الامام العالم الحافظ الثقة بهاء الدين ناصر السنة محدث الشام ابي محمد القسم ابن الامام الحافظ ثقة الدين ابي القسم علي بن الحسن بن هبة الله بن عبد الله بن الحسين الشافعي ولده ابو القسم علي وسيطه ابو المجد الفضل بن نبا بن الفضل والشيخ الامام ابو جعفر احمد

بن علي بن أبي بكر القرطبي وابناء أبو الحسن محمد وأبو الحسين اسمعيل والفقير أبو اسحاق ابراهيم بن شاكر بن عبد الله بن محمد الشافعي بقراءته وأبو علي الحسن بن علي بن عبد الوارث وأبو الربيع سليمان بن محمد ابن سليمان وأبو محمد عبد السلام بن أبي بكر بن أحمد وأبو منصور عبد الحق بن أحمد بن أحمد بن محمد بن محفوظ وأبو الحجاج يوسف بن أبي الفرج بن مهذب وأبو العباس أحمد بن عمر بن يحيى وأبو موسى عيسى بن موسى بن الزواوي وأبو الحسن علي بن تميم بن عبد السلام وأبو الفتح نصر بن هبة الله بن مساور وزرقان بن أبي الكرم ابن زرقان وأبو القسم بن أبي الفرج بن علي وأبو المعالي محمد بن عبد الله بن القسم وصديق بن سديك ومثيب السماع بدل بن أبي المعمر بن اسمعيل التبريزي وسمع النصف الأخير أبو الوحش عبد الرحمن بن أبي منصور بن بسيم وأبو طالب بن علي بن أبي الفرج وعمر بن عيسى بن معالي وذلك في العشر الأول من المحرم سنة اثنتين وتسعين وخمس مائة بدمشق هـ

Protocol No. 4 of a reading session, presided over by Nūr al-Dawla Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn ‘Abd al-Karīm ibn al-Ḥasan Ibn al-Kawwās al-‘Amirī, by virtue of his own listening to the author and an absolute *ijāza* issued by him, dated Damascus, in the citadel, the afternoon of Tuesday 16 Rabī‘ I 615/1218, and recorded by Isma‘īl ibn ‘Abd -Allāh al-Anmā‘ī (f. 20b):

سمع جميع هذا الجزء على الشيخ الأمين نور الدولة أبي الحسن علي بن عبد الكريم بن الحسن ابن الكواس العامري إيد: الله بسماعه و (؟) مؤلفه والملحق قري عليه بالإجازة المطلقة الشيخ الإمام العالم محب الدين أبو محمد عبد العزيز ابن الحسين بن عبد العزيز بن هلاله الأندلسي والشيخ الإمام عماد الدين أبو الوفاء صديق بن يوسف بن قمرس الدمشقي الحنفي والبطام (؟) أبو الحسن علي بن حسين بن أبي عبد الله بن أبي السري العسقلاني واسمعيل بن عبد الله ابن الأنطاطي وهذا خطه بقراءته وولده أبو بكر محمد وفق الله بهما وذلك بالقلعة المحروسة بدمشق بعد العصر من يوم الثلاثاء سادس عشر شهر ربيع الأول سنة خمس عشرة وستمائة الحمد لله والسلام على عباده الذين اصطفى

Protocol No. 5 of a reading session, presided over by Abū Naṣr Muḥammad ibn Hibat Allāh ibn Muḥammad al-Shīrazī (by virtue of his own listening and an *ijāza*), dated Damascus, in the beginning of Rajab 619/1222, and recorded in a *maghribī* hand by Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī Yādās al-Birzālī al-Ishbīlī (f. 20b):

سمع جميع هذا الجزء على القاضي الإمام حجة الاسلام اقضى القضاة أبي نصر محمد بن هبة الله بن محمد الشيرازي ابقاء الله بسماعه فيه والملحق فبالإجازة ابنا القاضيان أبو الفضل محمد وأبو المفاخر علي والفقهاء أبو عبد الله محمد بن حميان بن رافع العامري وأبو محمد عبد العزيز بن عثمان بن أبي طاهر الأربلي وأبو محمد جابر بن محمد بن جابر الأشبيلي المعروف برأس خروف وأبو بكر بن يوسف ابن علي بن زونران الدمشقي ومحمد بن يوسف بن محمد بن أبي يداس البرزالي الأشبيلي وهذا خطه وعارض به نسخته غرة رجب من سنة تسع عشرة وستماية بمنزل القاضي بدمشق حرسها الله والحمد لله وحده وصلاته على سيدنا محمد نبيه وسلامه

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

The Leiden fragment and the Azhar manuscript

According to van Koningsveld, the copy by al-Qāsim is preserved in the Library of al-Azhar University in Cairo, and the Leiden fragment would apparently originate from the same set as the twenty-one volumes of the *Ta'rikh Madīnat Dimashq*, which is now preserved in Library of al-Azhar University in Cairo.¹⁵ However, the Azhar set is evidently a set of very mixed origin and contents as is clear from the detailed description in the Azhar catalogue, and not all volumes and quires may come from al-Qāsim's copy. The first question to be asked, however, is whether there are volumes originating from al-Qāsim's copy at all in the Azhar set. Volumes 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 14, 17, 19 and 21 of the Azhar set all contain reader's protocols dated between 560-565 AH, which would coincide with the date 562 AH in the quires of the Leiden fragment, as these come from the middle part of the work. Volumes 1, 4 and 8 of the Azhar set contain reader's protocols dated between 571-572 AH, which is later than those in the Leiden fragment, but possibly not too late. Who would maintain that the eight hundred quires of the *Ta'rikh Madīnat Dimashq* were read in a strict numerical order, anyway?¹⁶ However, nowhere in the description in the Azhar catalogue is the connection of any of the volumes with the copy made by al-Qāsim explicitly mentioned, and one wonders why not. The Azhar catalogue mentions that the set comes from a copy of the work which has a division into 800 *ajzā'*, which number is, in the biographical literature usually connected with the number of *ajzā'* of al-Qāsim's copy.¹⁷ Additional doubt seems to be raised by volumes 8 and 9 of the Azhar set. According to the Azhar catalogue, volume 8 contains *ajzā'* 261-270, ending with a biography of a certain 'Abd -Allāh', and it has protocols which are dated 572 AH. Volume 9 of the Azhar set contains *ajzā'* 281-290, beginning with the biography of 'Abd -Allāh ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Alī al-Manṣūr, and it has protocols which are dated 562 AH. Apparently the *ajzā'* 271-280 are missing from the Azhar set and that is precisely the part of the text, of which the Leiden fragment is a part. However, if volume 9 of the Azhar set were part of al-Qāsim's copy, *juz'* 281 should start exactly where *juz'* 280 ends. Now, the Leiden fragment ends with *juz'* 280 somewhere in the middle of the biography of 'Abd -Allāh ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Alī al-Saffāh,¹⁸ and this does not fit with the information of the Azhar catalogue. But if one understands the Azhar catalogue in the sense that the first biography beginning in *juz'* 281 is that of 'Abd -Allāh ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Alī al-Mansur, then it suddenly does fit. An additional argument is the fact that in al-'Amrawī's edition (vol. 32, p. 287), the text corresponding with the end of the Leiden fragment exactly coincides with the transition between volumes 15 and 16 of the Marrakech manuscript, which for al-'Amrawī was the main source (*aṣl*) for that part of the text.¹⁹

¹⁵ Class-mark 714/10670. *Catalogue Azhar Library*, vol. 5, pp. 379-380.

¹⁶ If that were the case, it would take at least 800 days to read the same quire again. I doubt if this really happened.

¹⁷ See the résumé made of the biographies by N. Eliséeff.

¹⁸ F. 70a of the Leiden fragment, corresponding with vol. 32, p. 287, of al-'Amrawī's edition.

¹⁹ See al-'Amrawī's edition, vol. 32, pp. 287-288. He incorporates the colophon in his text, from which it transpires that that volume was copied on 20 Jumāda I 1112 (2 November 1700) by the copyist Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Sha'bī al-Mālikī al-'Adawī. For a full

Further study of the Azhar volumes is clearly necessary. The Azhar set is indeed mentioned by al-'Amrawī in his edition, though with very few remarks by him on its textual value. Al-'Amrawī gives the Azhar manuscript the siglum Z,²⁰ but he is silent about what would be, according to the Azhar catalogue, a very old set of volumes. A positive identification of the Leiden fragment with the Azhar set was attempted in January 1994 by the present author, but failed because of lack of cooperation on the part of the Azhar librarians. All the circumstantial evidence, however, points to the fact that at least some volumes of the Azhar set may indeed be identified with al-Qāsim's copy of the *Ta'rikh Madīnat Dimashq*.

Till the publication of the first volume of al-'Amrawī's edition, this problem could only be solved by comparing the Leiden fragment with the Azhar manuscript, but that was unavailable. A classical deadlock. Al-'Amrawī has now published two reproductions from the first volume of the Azhar set, which are revealing images, despite their poor graphical quality.²¹ It transpires from these that the first volume of the Azhar set of the *Ta'rikh Madīnat Dimashq* is not an old manuscript at all, and that it is certainly not the copy written by the author's son al-Qāsim.

First, al-'Amrawī reproduces an unspecified opening from what he says is the Azhar manuscript. It shows the transition between *juz'* 7 and *juz'* 8 of the text of the 'History'. The Azhar catalogue does not mention a volume in which these *ajzā'* are present, but the catalogue can be mistaken. In the reproduction there is no division into separate *ajzā'* or quires whatsoever. On the same page where *juz'* 7 ends, *juz'* 8 starts, without further ado, and without any readers' protocols in between the *ajzā'*. The next reproduction given by al-'Amrawī is even more revealing. It shows the transition from *juz'* 3 to *juz'* 4 of the text, apparently from the first volume, which according to the Azhar catalogue contains a reading protocol with the date 571AH. It contains part of the introductory section of the 'History'. Between these two *ajzā'* there is the text of two protocols of reading sessions, but they are copies taken directly or indirectly from the exemplar of the Azhar manuscript, a fact which the Azhar cataloguer failed to notice, as he described the protocols as if they were genuinely old and authentic. The first of these two protocols describes a reading session presided over by the author, held in Rabī' I 557 (February-March 1162) for several members of his family, including his son al-Qāsim, and for a few others, at or near the Eastern minaret of the Great Mosque of Damascus and recorded by 'Umar ibn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-'Alīmī. Partial reading is separately recorded. In addition, there is a note saying that Aḥmad ibn Aḥmad al-Maqdisī copied the protocol in Ramadan 610 (January-February 1214). The text of this protocol reads as follows:

على الاصل ما صورته سمع هذا الجزء على مصنفه الشيخ الفقيه الامام الحافظ العالم نور الدين محدث (?) الشام صدر الحفاظ ابي القاسم علي بن الحسن بن هبة الله الشافعي وقاسم ابنه عنه (?) ابنه ابو الفتح الحسن وحفيده ابو الطاهر محمد وابناء اخيه ابو الفضل احمد وابو البركات عن اينا

survey of the contents and an indication of the age of the (incomplete) 31-volume set of the Marrakech manuscript, see the Yūsufiyya catalogue, pp. 456-461 (Nos. 1665-1692).

²⁰ Edition, vol. I, p. 51.

²¹ Edition, vol. I, pp. 61-62.

الامين ابي عبد الله محمد بن الحسين (؟) ويوسف بن ظافر بن علي الطرابلسي وعمر بن محمد بن محمد العلمي والخط له وذلك في شهر ربيع الاول سنة سبع وخمسين وخمسمائة بالمنازة الشرقية من جامع دمشق بعضه بقراءة الحافظ الم [صنف] والباقي بقراءة العلمي نقله احمد بن احمد المقدسي في رمضان من سنة عشر وستمائة

The second protocol begins with a number of references to the author, and to his great-great-grandson al-Qāsim ibn 'Alī ibn Muhammad ibn al-Qāsim by virtue of listening certificates, but the session is, if I read the text correctly, apparently presided over by Abū al-Futūḥ 'Abd al-Razzāq. The session took place on Thursday 10 Safar 614 (26 May 1217). As the secretary is Isma'īl ibn 'Abd -Allāh al-Anmāṭī, who is also the secretary of fourth set of protocols in the Leiden fragment, the place of the session was probably Damascus, either mosque or citadel, or in the mosque in al-Mizza, as these are the localities specified in the Leiden fragment. Here too, partial reading is separately recorded. The text of the protocol reads as follows:

وعليه ايضا ما صورته سمع جميع هذا الجزء على الشيخ الامام مفتي الشام فخر الدين بقية (؟) المشايخ ابي منصور عبد الرحمن بن محمد بن الحسن الشافعي بسماعه من عمه مؤلفه رحمه الله ... (؟) ملحق في حواشيه وفي أوله ملحق اجازته منه ان لم يكن سماعا صاحبه الولد النجيب شمس الحفاظ ابو محمد القاسم بن ابي القاسم علي بن محمد بن القاسم بن الامام مؤلفه رحمه الله وان المسمع ابو الفتوح عبد الرزاق وابناء اخيه ابو ال... (؟) وابو الفتوح نصر الله بن احمد بن محمد بن الحسن وابو اسعد عبد الله بن الحسن بن محمد بن الحسن والاصل الفقيه محب الدين ابو محمد عبد العزيز بن الحسين بن عبد العزيز بن هلاله الاندلسي وبقراءته من اوله الى الثاني الوجه الثاني من الورقة السابعة والامين مجد الدين ابو القاسم عمر بن احمد بن هبة الله بن ابي جرادة وبقراءته بقية الجزء والامين ابو المعطي (؟) صالح بن اسمعيل بن احمد بن المعطي المصري وابو طالب محمد بن عبد الله بن عبد الرحمن بن صابر السلمي وابنه عبد الله وابو المعالي محمد بن جامع بن ناجي التميمي وابنه محمد والظهير بن داود ابن سليمان بن حميد بن كثير البليسي ورزق الله بن يحيى بن رزق الله الناصري (؟) الدمشقيان وابو علي الحسن بن ابي عبد الله محمد بن الحسين الانصاري المقرئ سبط بن المنصور واخوه لاييه محمد وعمر بن عبد الوهاب بن ابي بكر السوسي وعبد الله بن عبد الباري وعبد الصمد الد... سي (؟) اسمعيل بن عبد الله الانطاكي وهذا خطه وابنه محمد في الخامسة وفتاد صافي في مجلسين اخرهما يوم الخميس عاشر صفر سنة اربع عشر وستمائة والحمد لله والصلاة على سيدنا محمد واله والسلام وحسبنا الله ونعم الوكيل

However, both these protocols from the first volume of the Azhar manuscript are copies, or probably copies of copies, written in a manuscript of much later date than the year mentioned in the protocols. The poor quality of the reproductions makes a dating of the first volume of the Azhar manuscript, even a dating by the century, a hazardous affair. Why al-'Amrawī refrained from using the Azhar set remains unclear. The manuscripts which he did prefer are not older, nor more authentic than some of the volumes in the Azhar set in which there are remnants of the copy written by al-Qāsim of his father's work. That both the Azhar and the Zāhiriyya libraries contain old fragments of Ibn 'Asākir's 'History' is borne out by the illustrations given by

Ṣalaḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid.²² A much more detailed description of the manuscripts would have been in place, but is now unfortunately lacking.

The Leiden fragment and the new edition of the *Ta'rīkh Madīnat Dimashq*

As the recent edition of Ibn 'Asākir's 'History of the City of Damascus' by al-'Amrawī is almost devoid of bibliographical references as far as its manuscript basis is concerned, we will here supply some of the most basic details. The relevant information must be extracted from the edition's combined notes and apparatus system at the foot of each page. The introduction in the first volume only sheds a very limited amount of light on the manuscripts and their use by the editor.²³ The new edition is primarily based on six sets of manuscripts. First there are the manuscript volumes in the Zāhiriyya Library in Damascus.²⁴ Al-'Amrawī refers to these volumes as *al-Nuskha al-Sulaymāniyya*, because they form part of a Waqf instituted by Sulaymān Bāsha, a governor of Damascus. The volumes of this so-called archetype (*nuskha umm*) are described in the Zāhiriyya catalogue by Yūsuf al-'Ush.²⁵ It is a mixed manuscript, with very old volumes, but also with later parts containing dates in the 12th/18th century. As the Zāhiriyya set of volumes is in many places incomplete or corrupt, the editor had to use other manuscripts as well. One such other manuscript which he used was the set of twelve volumes from Istanbul. Ahmet III. No. 2887 in the Topkapi Library.²⁶ The other manuscript witnesses of the book which served as a basis for the new edition are from the Bibliothèque Générale in Rabat, the Bibliothèque Nationale in Tunis, the set of thirty-one volumes in the Bibliothèque Ibn Yūsuf, volumes Nos. 1665-1692, in Marrakech (known as *al-Nuskha al-Maghribiyya* and also as *al-Nuskha al-Yūsufiyya*).²⁷ This manuscript, which was made by al-'Amrawī into a textual witness of archetypal value as well, is also a relatively late manuscript. The colophon of vol. 15 of the Marrakech manuscript is quoted in the edition by al-'Amrawī, vol. 32, p. 287, and it contains the date Tuesday 20 Jumādā I 1112 (2 November 1700). Al-'Amrawī also refers to the set of twenty-one volumes in the Library of al-Azhar University in Cairo, which I have discussed above. On the basis of these manuscripts the editor has set himself, as he says, to produce a good text, without mistakes and lacunae.²⁸ Al-'Amrawī in his preface refers to the rules of edition of texts as given by Ṣalaḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid in his own

²² Plate 5 shows an autograph note by Ibn 'Asākir dated 549/1154-1155 and one dated 564/1168-1169, both from the Zāhiriyya library. Plates 1 and 2 show images of genuinely old volumes in the Azhar library.

²³ Even an updated survey of the manuscripts as Ṣalaḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid has given in the first volume of his edition (pp. 44-46) is lacking.

²⁴ See al-'Amrawī's introduction, vol. 1, pp. 36-64.

²⁵ Catalogue, pp. 109-130. It is the set of nineteen volumes bearing the class-marks Ta'rīkh 1-5, 113, 6-18. It was published in facsimile in Amman in 1407/1987 in 19 volumes, an edition which I have not seen.

²⁶ See the description in the catalogue by Karatay, vol. 3, pp. 448-451, Nos. 6095-6106.

²⁷ Catalogue, pp. 456-461.

²⁸ Vol. 1, editor's introduction, p. 36.

edition of part of Ibn 'Asākir's 'History of the City of Damascus'.²⁹ However, these rules are more editorial instructions and prescriptions to typographers rather than a description of textual criticism. In fact al-'Amrawī does not go any further than describe his methodology: comparing the manuscripts, and confronting them, and establishing what he considers to be correct.³⁰ Al-'Amrawī's critical apparatus in the edition is of great simplicity, since any awareness of a critical and stemmatic approach in which a hierarchy of manuscripts could be established is absent.

Sakīna al-Shihābī's edition of vol. 38 of *Ta'rikh Madīnat Dimashq* has an overlap of text with the Leiden fragment. Her volume begins with the first complete biography of the Leiden fragment.³¹ That edition does not show any of the marks of what I have styled as 'the son's copy' and will therefore not further be discussed here.

With the scanty evidence of the Leiden fragment, which contains only 72 ff. plus two small inserts, a few remarks on the relationship between some of the manuscripts of the *Ta'rikh Madīnat Dimashq* may be made here. Looking once more at the beginning of vol. 16 of the Marrakech manuscript,³² it is evident that the Marrakech manuscript is closely related to the copy of the 'History of the City of Damaseus', made by the author's son al-Qāsim. The volume begins with the same formula as the four quires in the Leiden fragment, including the dubious *tarhīm* after the author's name. If we look for similar instances in the edition, we see references to the author preceded by the word *wālidī*, my father, in vol. 32, pp. 29, 88, 152 and 223. These instances exactly match the beginnings of the four *ajzā'* in the Leiden fragment, and similar sentences do not occur in the text in between these instances. From this it follows that a number of volumes of the Marrakech MS and of the Azhar MS go back to the son's copy.

We have already seen that some doubt could be cast on the credentials of the son's copy as preserved in the Leiden fragment. The question must be asked whether more can be known about the Leiden fragment with the help of the edition. A conspicuous feature of the Leiden fragment is the frequent occurrence of marginal notes, with even two small inserts. The ductus of the main text in the Leiden fragment is regular, very expert, even of calligraphic quality, almost entirely without diacritics, and with many ligatures and connections which are unusual or even not allowed at all in 'normal' script. The main text does not give the impression of being a draft copy. The marginal notes, and the text on the two inserts, however, are in such different script, that one may even ask whether these were really written by the copyist, the author's son al-Qāsim. Whether or not, their script can only be characterized as rather irregular, not calligraphic at all, and they look very

²⁹ See the resume of these rules and al-'Amrawī's description of how he coped with them in practice in his preface to vol. 1, pp. 43ff. See also the book with guidelines by 'Abd al-Salām Hārūn on the subject.

³⁰ Vol. 1, p. 43. His is a clear case of the primate of al-Dhawq al-Salīm, 'good taste', over textual criticism. See on this my article 'Establishing the stemma. Fact or fiction?', in MME 3 (1989), pp. 88-101.

³¹ 'Abd -Allāh ibn Qays ibn Makhrama, corresponding with f. 25b of the Leiden fragment.

³² Edition, vol. 32, p. 288, which part of the text is based on the Marrakech manuscript.

much as if they were intended as a draft version. The use of these marginal additions in the copies which were made from the son's copy as preserved in the Leiden fragment must be the subject of further analysis.

Conclusion

With such a huge work as Ibn 'Asākir's 'History of the City of Damascus' the transmission and distribution of the text from the very beginning posed all sorts of problems. In the present essay an attempt has been made to show how the author's contemporaries and direct descendants have coped with this and supervised the distribution of the text through reading sessions; a popular way of distributing text in 12th century Damascus. Examples of protocols of these readers' sessions have been edited. A theory about copyright *avant la lettre* has been proposed.

In the past half century an impressive scholarly effort has been undertaken to make the full text of the 'History' available. The relationship of parts of the editions with the manuscripts has been discussed. Aspects of the interdependence of some of the manuscripts of the 'History', now kept in libraries all over the world, have been studied. With the help of the son's copy of his father's work, relations between some of the manuscripts of Ibn 'Asākir's monumental work have been reconstructed.

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منشورات مؤسسة الفرقان للتراث الإسلامي رقم: ٧٠

مَقَالَتَايَا فِي رَأْسِهَا هِدَايَةُ

إلى الدكتور صلاح الدين المنجد



مؤسسة الفرقان للتراث الإسلامي

لندن ١٤٢٣هـ / ٢٠٠٢م